

# STATE OF ALASKA /

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

### *DIVISION OF MINING, LAND AND WATER*

#### REALTY SERVICES

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### KOTSINA RIVER AND TRAIL SURVEY

Dear Survey Respondents and Interested Public:

The State of Alaska recently collected over 50 surveys from users of the Kotsina Trail and Kotsina River near Chitina. The purpose of this survey was to determine if the State should pursue an appeal of the Bureau of Land Management's proposed termination of EIN 16, a 17(b) easement.

Attached is a summary of the survey responses. Users included those that kayaked the Kotsina River, use the trail for horses and commercial guiding, and crossed the river in rafts to access public land. Many use the trails in this area to access private in holdings or go to public lands for subsistence hunting. In holders recognize the multiple uses and potential need for continued public access.

The Kotsina Trail to be terminated is the trail that accesses the historic west route and crosses the river about 8 miles upstream from the mouth. Many confused this with the Kotsina Road reserved as EIN 17, also called the Berry Brothers Road. Both routes were built in the early 1900s to provide access to mining claims. Alaska Public Road Commission records show there used to be a bridge on EIN 16. Since then, this route is used for winter access to cross the river and reach public lands to the north, mostly by snow machines. **The Kotsina Trail/Berry Brothers Road is not being terminated.**

As a result of the informative responses, we have decided to drop the appeal but instead protect public access rights under the State of Alaska's claimed Revised Statute 2477 (RS 2477) program. This trail has been certified by the state legislature as a qualifying route due to public construction and use. Historic routes were granted to states by the federal government between 1871 and 1976. However, not all routes are maintained. Trail management is often left up to users.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act does not allow 17(b) easements to be reserved to conduct hunting or subsistence activities on Native Corporation's private lands. 17(b) easements should be used to access public lands and resources.

The attached map shows the general land status of Native, Federal and private lands over (40 acres) in the Kotsina area. Lands that were formerly managed as public lands may now be under private corporation management.

In the coming months, many more ANCSA 17(b) easements must be reviewed to see if they are used and should be retained. Not all qualify for RS 2477 claims. Surveys are now being prepared for easement use in the Kenny Lake and Gulkana area. Please check our website, [www.dnr.state.ak.us](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us), call or visit the nearest DNR Public Information Office or BLM Field Office for more information.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

*Doreen Sullivan*

Doreen Sullivan  
ANCSA Easement Coordinator

**PUBLIC USE SURVEY****RESPONSES – Kotsina Area**

1. Have you used the Kotsina Trail near Chitina, Alaska to gain access to public lands or water (EIN 16 on attached map)?
 

▪ Yes	<b>60.87%</b>
▪ No	<b>4%</b>
  
2. What type of vehicle did you use?
 

▪ ATV	<b>32.61%</b>
▪ Snowmachine	<b>30.43%</b>
▪ 2 wheel drive	<b>8.70%</b>
▪ 4 wheel drive	<b>34.43%</b>
  
3. How many times **before** 1976? **Over 52 uses 17.39% of respondents**  
 How many times **after** 1976? **Over 450 uses, some weekly, 73.91% of respondents**
  
4. Have you ever used the Kotsina Trail, by vehicle or by foot, to get to the Kotsina River?  
**YES 52.17%**
  
5. What type of watercraft have you used on the Kotsina River?
 

▪ Kayak	<b>13.03%</b>
▪ inflatable raft	<b>17.39%</b>
▪ canoe	<b>10.87%</b>
▪ skiff	<b>2.17%</b>
▪ motorboat	<b>2.17%</b>
▪ hovercraft	<b>0%</b>
▪ other:	<b>8.70% (destination was river itself)</b>
  
6. On the Kotsina River, have you used a boat that carried 1000 lbs. or 4 or more people?  
**YES 8.70%**
  
7. What was the purpose of your Kotsina River trip? *Circle all that apply:*

▪ recreation	<b>50.00%</b>	▪ mining	<b>2.17%</b>
▪ boating	<b>4.35%</b>	▪ fish guiding	<b>0%</b>
▪ research	<b>21.74%</b>	▪ tour guiding	<b>6.52%</b>
▪ hunting/trapping	<b>36.96%</b>	▪ wildlife viewing	<b>36.96%</b>
▪ public lands & water	<b>39.13%</b>	▪ fishing	<b>10.87%</b>
▪ private parcels	<b>15.22%</b>	▪ other:	<b>30.43%</b>

## 9. Additional comments:

4 -wheeling  
 access Dixie pass trails (several responses); access to Nugget Creek Trail  
 access for subsistence hunting in Park & Preserve (x4)  
 access Kotsina River for recreation  
 access to Dixie Pass trail is important  
 author guide book (x4)  
 beautiful scenery (x2)  
 berry picking  
 dogsleds  
 essential access to area residents  
 excellent trail & access to public lands & water.  
 family & friends use a lot since 1974  
 ferries  
 fishing  
 fly in guide - customers use trail to get to hunting grounds  
 hiking  
 horse trail and winter access to west side  
 horses, saddle & pack (x4)  
 is a road not a trail; provides the only access to huge area around it; put in by miners years  
 ago  
 it's a trail made for people to use  
 kayak (x3)  
 Keep open (numerous responses) do not close; want to use in future;  
 mountain bikes  
 not used (2)  
 access his private property, multiple public uses  
 private landowners use  
 research for kayak runs  
 research trail guide book  
 sightseeing  
 skis (several)  
 snowmobile to west side to hunt on public lands  
 subsistence  
 the Kotsina River is one of the best whitewater runs for kayaks in the entire state  
 to appreciate wilderness qualities  
 tourism (several)  
 Trails such as this are few & far between.  
 trapping  
 waited 2 days for water to go down, crossed river with horses, access to mining claims (1901)  
 widely used by Alaskans and tourist